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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to develop a profile of career guidance technicians (CGTs) working in California's public high schools and community colleges during the 1987-1988 academic year. Surveys were completed by 262 CGTs in 37 California counties. The results provided data on demographics, job descriptions, staff relations, the services rendered by CGTs at high school and community college career centers, and respondents' prioritized career guidance program functions. Outcomes of interest were that career guidance technicians were also doing college guidance, which was probably hinged to their use of computer based files of colleges and occupations; were mostly middle-aged white women; and truly loved their jobs. Respondents had many different titles and were highly educated; 72% had a college degree. This profile is useful in bringing definition to California's career counseling and guidance professional and paraprofessional. (NB)

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California's Career Guidance Technicians: A Profile

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Running head: CALIFORNIA'S CAREER GUIDANCE PROFILE

This profile is based on a survey sent to career guidance technicians (CGT's) working in public high schools and community colleges throughout California during the school year, 1987-88. They go by many names but most of them are called CGT's.

Completed surveys were returned from thirty-seven California counties in large enough numbers (n=262) to say that they are representative of everyone doing the job. As a result, the data generated portray the significant features of the entire body of CGT's in California. A compilation of the answers given to the career guidance survey is presented below followed by conclusions.

Demographics

41% of the CGT's are in their 40's and are White (92%) women (87%) with an interesting educational profile (HS, 25%; AA, 26%; BA, 26%; MA, 20%; DOC, 0.4%; other, 2.4%). A majority (55%) of the CGT's work at schools or colleges which have more than 1500 students and most of them are working in high schools serving students in grades 9-12.

Figure 1

Insert Figure 1 about here

Figure 2

Insert Figure 2 about here

Job Profile

This section is a detailed job description of the current California career guidance technician.

Job Titles

Job titles for CGT's are multivariant; 21% are referred to as career guidance technicians. Almost as many (19%) are called career center technicians. 46% have other titles, e.g., career technician and the like. Single titles appeared in the greatest numbers.

Certificated Employees

Approximately one-quarter (27%) of CGT's are certificated employees, that is to say they have education licenses probably teaching or counseling credentials or both. The fact that they included themselves does not change the results dramatically. Suffice it to say that pay and educational levels are higher among certificated CGT's.

Figure 3

Insert Figure 3 about here

Classified Employees

About three-quarters (73%) of all CGT's in California are classified employees, they are in the same category as clerks and are paid by the hour.

Satisfaction Level

The vast majority (82%) of CGT's feel good about being in their position but certificated are more (92%) satisfied than classified (79%).

Year(s) of Employment

Most (36%) of the CGT's in California are in their first or second year of employment. About half of that number of classified are in their first year. 32% of certificated CGT's are in their first year. 20% have worked 3-4 years, 16% 5-6 years, 9% 7-8 years, 13% 9-10 years and 5% over 10 years.

Figure 4

Insert Figure 4 about here

CGT's Major "Like"

To the question, "Do you like your job?" the answer was virtually unanimous. 98% said, "yes!".

Figure 5

Insert Figure 5 about here

Pay Scales

Pay scales for CGT's usually (88%) have five or more steps and close to three-quarters (71%) of them thought that that is OK. 38% are being paid $10.00 or more an hour but there was a split, 55 to 45, as to whether or not that was something to feel good about. Five reasons for the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction expressed could be because the remainder are being paid less. 1) 24% of CGT's are getting $9; 2) 17% get $8; 3) 10% get $7; 4) 8% get $6; and 5) 3% are receiving $5 per hour. Out of the 45% who said that the pay scale was not OK the majority (59%) want to be paid more than $10 an hour and 14% would like $9 an hour or more for their efforts. It is of note that 89% of certificated CGT's get $10 or more an hour.

Figure 6

Insert Figure 6 about here

Hours Per Day

Over half (55%) of CGT's work seven or more hours a day, another 20% work a six hour day and 22% put-in three or four hours daily for pay. 70% of them like it that way. When looking at the CGT's who said, the paid hours they get a day is a major "don't like", one sees that almost two-thirds (65%) of them felt they should be paid for eight or more hours.

The Ten Month Year

A large section (65%) of CGT's work a ten month year. 7% work eleven months and 2% work a full year. On the other end of the scale 25% work nine months and only 3% work fewer months than that.

Training Configuration

78% of CGT's have been trained. This is how it is constituted: on the job, 73%; self-instructional materials, 65%; district workshops, 51%; county workshops, 46%; and state workshops, 35%. 10% of the group have received tuition reimbursement for college coursework. 22% of the CGT's indicated that they had not been trained for their position and, out of that number, **83% said "yes", they are interested.**

Support Fund

44% of CGT's positions are being funded by regional occupational preparation programs (ROP's). 13% are being

subsumed, for pay, under the Vocational Education Act (VEA), SIP (School Improvement Program) is paying for 12% and 31% are getting their money from other sources. Figure 7

Insert Figure 7 about here

Job Descriptions

To the question, "Is there a written job description for your position?" 74% answered, "Yes!". 73 CGT's sent a job description in with their completed protocol.

Examination

47% of California's CGT were not required to take or pass a qualifying examination for their job. Out of the ones who did take a test only half said that it tested for career guidance, education and development knowledge, skills or attitudes.

Merit System

A high number (78%) of CGT's report that the school district or college which employs them does not use a merit system and, interestingly enough, 68% of that group said it should.

Supervision and Feedback

85% of CGT's believe that they are being supervised

and evaluated by the appropriate person.

Staff Relations

41% of CGT's co-workers see them as staff support personnel, 34% view them as being professionals and 19% consider them to be clerks.

Which staff meetings do CGT's attend? 44% of them go to sessions for classified employees, 5% attend meetings for clerks and 30% participate in counselor confabs. 65% of certificated CGT's go to counseling staff meetings.

Career Guidance Center Services

This section tells about the center itself and its location. Media software and hardware, goals and objectives, staffing, materials and marketing are also covered. Feedback on the intensity of community involvement and the types of self-assessment instruments used is also included

Career Guidance Centers

There are places designated as career guidance centers at 96% of the schools and colleges at which CGT's work. 84% of the centers are centrally located. At high schools, on average: 56% of ninth-graders are served by the center's CGT, 71% of tenth-graders, 65% of eleventh-graders and 64% of twelfth-graders.

Figure 8

Insert Figure 8 about here

97% of career centers in California also handle college information but only a little over one-third (38%) of them also employ a college information technician or a college counselor. Confounding as it may seem, out of the 62% who said that no additional help was needed to handle this component of counseling and guidance, 67% said no extra help should be provided.

Media Hardware

Career centers have several types of media hardware. 79% possess computers; 62% have video-tape recorders/players; 63% use microfiche projectors; 49%, TV's; 20%, radios; and 74% have printed materials.

Software

The information systems career centers possess run the gamut, for example, 45% have VIEW; 37% have EUREKA; 30% have COIN; 21% have GIS; 9% have CHOICES and 27% have others.

Goals and Objectives

Only 53% of the California career centers have written goals and objectives; 81% of those which do not ought to, according to the CGT's working there.

Staffing

How are career centers staffed in California? 68% have a CGT. 27% have a counselor. 11% have a work experience coordinator, 10% an ROP tech., 9% a secretary, 8% an administrator, 7% a ROP counselor, 6% a college tech. and 3% have a clerk on staff.

Materials

To the question, "Does the Center have a variety of materials available to suit the various groups enrolled. . .?". 73% of the CGT's answered, "Yes!".

Marketing

To the query, "Does the Center market its services?" 79% responded affirmatively.

Self-assessment Instruments

84% of career centers also provide students with self-assessment instruments. The ones most frequently mentioned were the COPS and COPES.

Follow-up Studies

Only 15% of California career centers conduct graduate follow-up studies.

Program Functions

CGT's ranked the top 8, out of a total of 25 functions presented to them for consideration, as follows: 1) helping students locate career information, 2) providing college information, 3) orientating

students, 4) making classroom presentations, 5) issuing work permits, 6) providing financial aid information, 7) ROP recruitment and 8) assisting teachers.

Student Outcomes

It is of special note that: one-third of the CGT's time at work is spent helping students obtain career and college information. One-half of their task related time is spent doing the above plus orientating students, making classroom presentations, which were often lumped in with doing group guidance, issuing work permits and providing financial aid information. In a nut shell, goals which were ranked from one to six is where most of the action is in career/college centers in California. It is to be noted further that they are all student outcome goals.

Program Goals

Only 18% of CGT's time on the job is devoted to attaining program goals. The ones most frequently acted on are ROP recruitment and assisting teachers. They rank 7 and 8 respectively.

Conclusions

The conclusions flow from the data; they are both logical and speculative mixed in with recommendations.

Job Descriptions

To eliminate the prevailing confusion regarding a

job description for CGT's, personnel offices would be well advised to adopt, for classified CGT's, the one contained in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT). Certificated CGT's may want to write their own job description and/or become individual contractors. This is the procedure being adopted in one of the larger California school districts. In that way career/college guidance professionals, who do not wish to be teachers in a formal sense, may be able to avoid unrelated credentialling requirements while being fully qualified to be guidance and development professionals.

Gender and Ethnic Equity

School personnel offices need to become aware of the fact that CGT's in California are predominantly White women which is incongruent with the gender and ethnic profile of California's students. 1987 graduates were 49% male and 51% female. 51% were White, 30% Hispanic, 9% Black, 7% Asian, 2% Filipino and the remainder Pacific Islanders and American Indians or native Alaskans. Communications alone could be dramatically improved if Hispanic CGT's were employed at schools and colleges which serve mostly Hispanic students.

College Guidance

CGT's who are only high school graduates are doing college advisement without prerequisite experience. College bound students deserve to have college graduates guide them on the path toward higher education not persons who have never been there. 62% of CGT's do not have a bachelor's degree but providing college information takes up 14% of their time. No blame is intended as far as CGT's are concerned; they are encouraged to be overreaching by funding shortages which in turn engender a qualifications vacuum. Our society wants professional services but does not want to pay professional level salaries. Managers have found a way, due to the pressures of a market oriented political economy, to get college and career guidance services provided "on the cheap".

Turn-over

There is a high turn-over of CGT's. 36% are first and second year employees. 36% of certificated CGT's are in their first year. The reasons for this could be many but three which come to mind are: 1) being a CGT requires specialized knowledge and some advanced training especially if she does not have the requsite education and is hired in lieu of a certificated person; 2) too much may be expected of her in the way of tasks

and intensity of effort for too little pay and; 3) budget priorities fluctuate from one year to another. These conditions of employment make tenure as a CGT tentative at best except in situations where management makes a long term commitment to career guidance, education and development programs.

Status Seeking

CGT's need a lift. They are underpaid and overworked as a group. They are being exploited. This is often the case in occupations dominated by women, e.g.'s, nurses and teachers. CGT's find that there is so much to be done and so few to do it. Consequently, they try to fill the void and and by so doing find themselves impaled on the horns of a dilemma. What to do? One thing is to think of career and college guidance as a two story structure. Classified CGT's are guiding students on the first floor certificated, on the second. To go up to the second floor (higher status) classified CGT's needs to exit the structure and climb the ladder (higher education) located outside the building. If classified CGT's did that, they would be qualified to receive pay and prestige commensurate with the professional work that most of them do. On the other hand they may find it hard to get a job. CGT's seeking higher status vis-a-vis California's schools and colleges, at the present time,

may have a problem without a satisfactory solution.

Abstract for the Heading

This paper, based on a survey of California's career guidance technicians delineates their demographics, job description, staff relations, the services rendered by them at high school and community college career centers and their prioritized career guidance program functions. Outcomes of interest were that career guidance technicians are also doing college guidance which is probably hinged to their use of computer based files on colleges and occupations, are mostly middle aged white women and truly love their jobs. They have many different titles and are highly educated; 72% of them have a college degree. This portrait attempts to bring definition to California's career counseling and guidance professional and paraprofessional.

Author Notes

California's Career Guidance Technicians: A Profile was presented at the annual convention of the California Association for Counseling and Development (San Francisco, CA, February 26-28, 1988). A version of the paper, emphasizing the role of **certificated** CGT's, appeared in the March, 1988 issue of the CACD Compass, a quarterly newsletter. The survey, on which the paper is based, was initiated by the California Career Education Association and supported by both the CCEA and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Another version of the report, emphasizing the role of **classified** CGT's appeared in the March, 1988 issue of the CCEA Journal and was presented at the annual conference of the CCEA (Oakland, CA, March 3-4, 1988). Statistical support was provided by Steve Yamarone, Division of Evaluation, Attendance and Pupil Services, LACOE but responsibility for the paper remains with the author.

Figure captions

Figure 1. Age Group Breakdown

Figure 2. Educational Profile

Figure 3. CGT's Classified vs Certificated

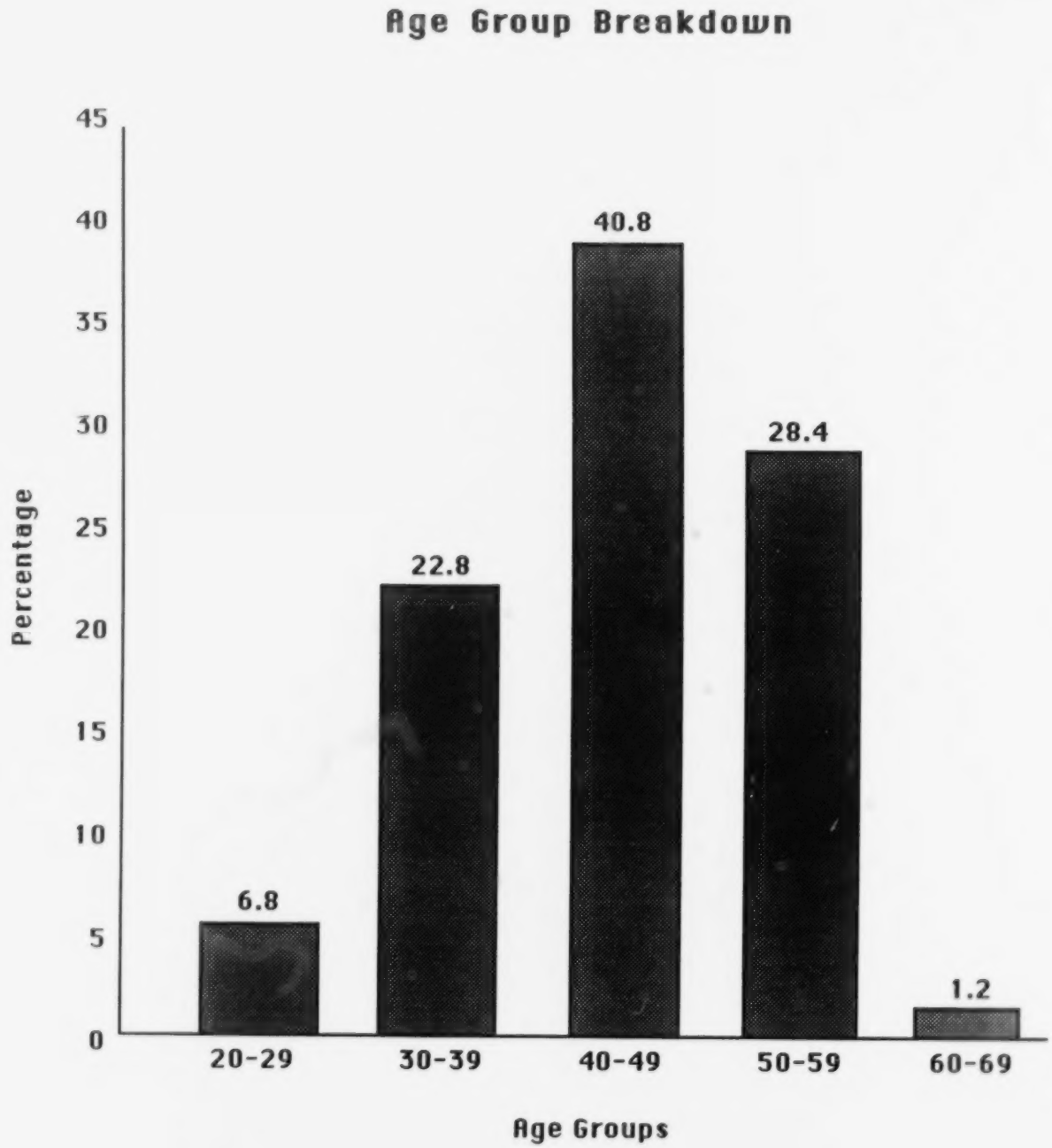
Figure 4. Breakdown by Number of Years in Position

Figure 5. "Do you like your job?"

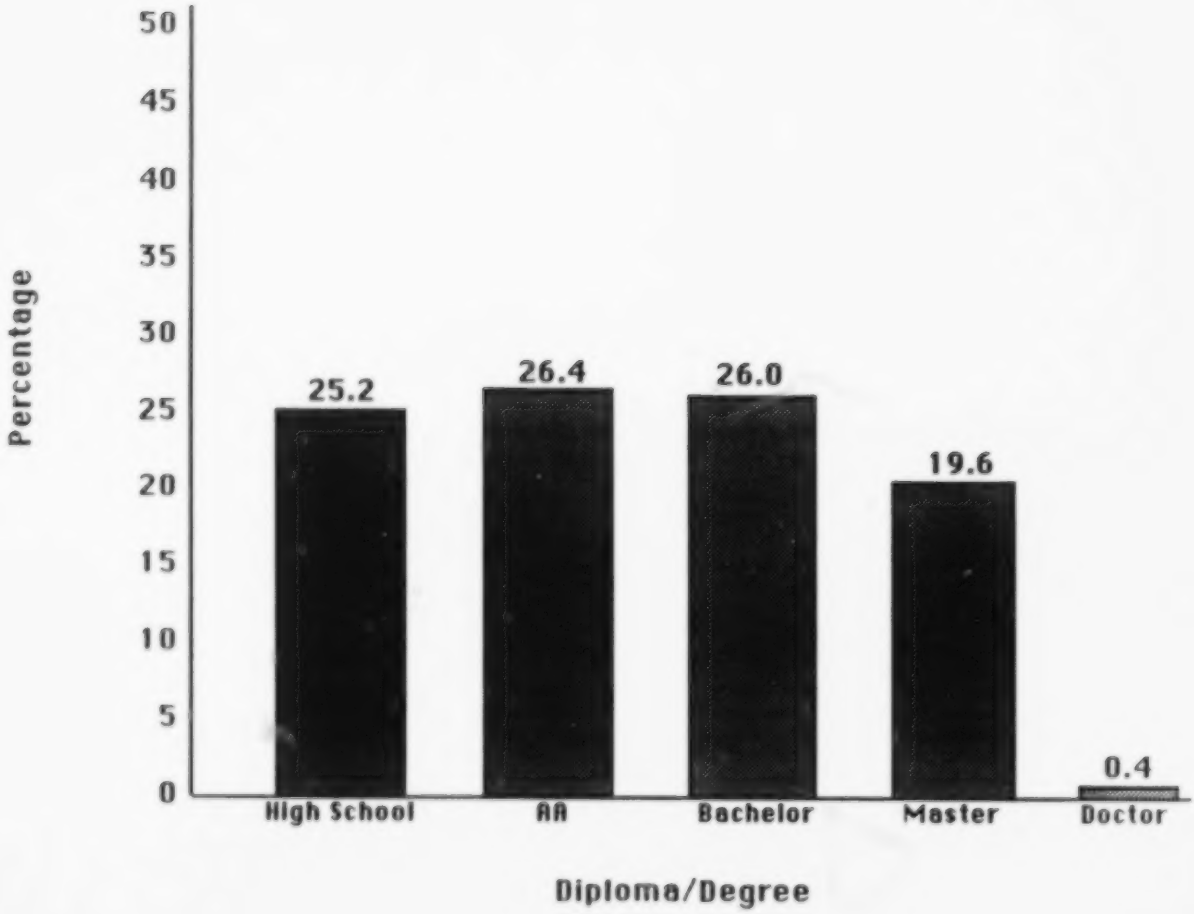
Figure 6. Breakdown by Salary Level

Figure 7. "How Is Your Position Funded?"

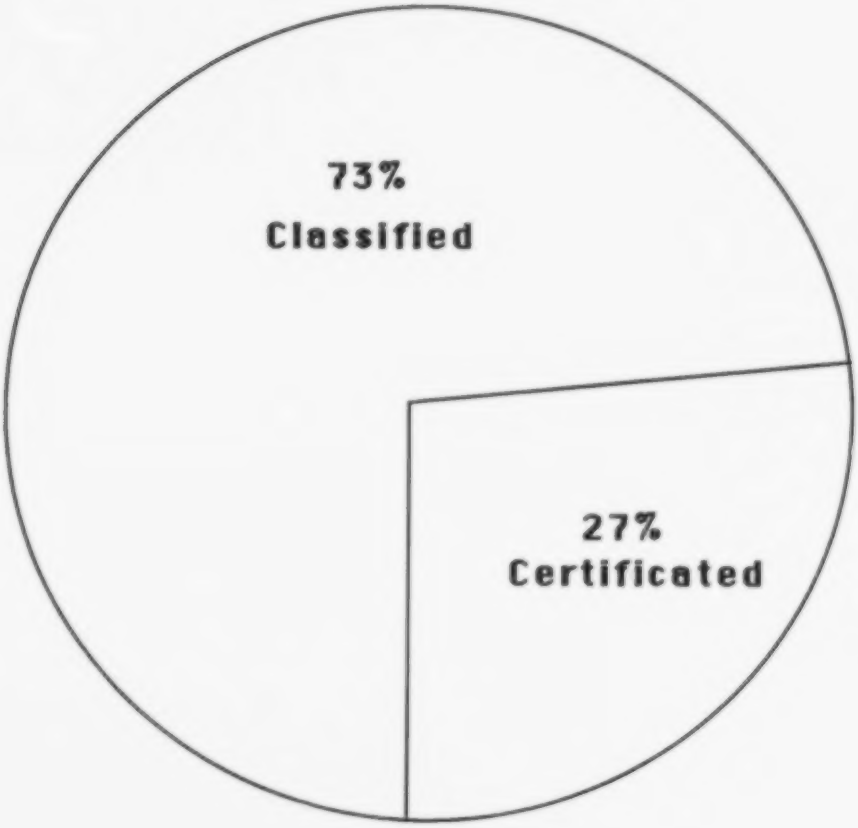
Figure 8. Percentage of Students Served by Grade Level


Age Group Breakdown
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Percentage
6.8
22.8
40.8
28.4
1.2
20-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
60-69
Age Groups

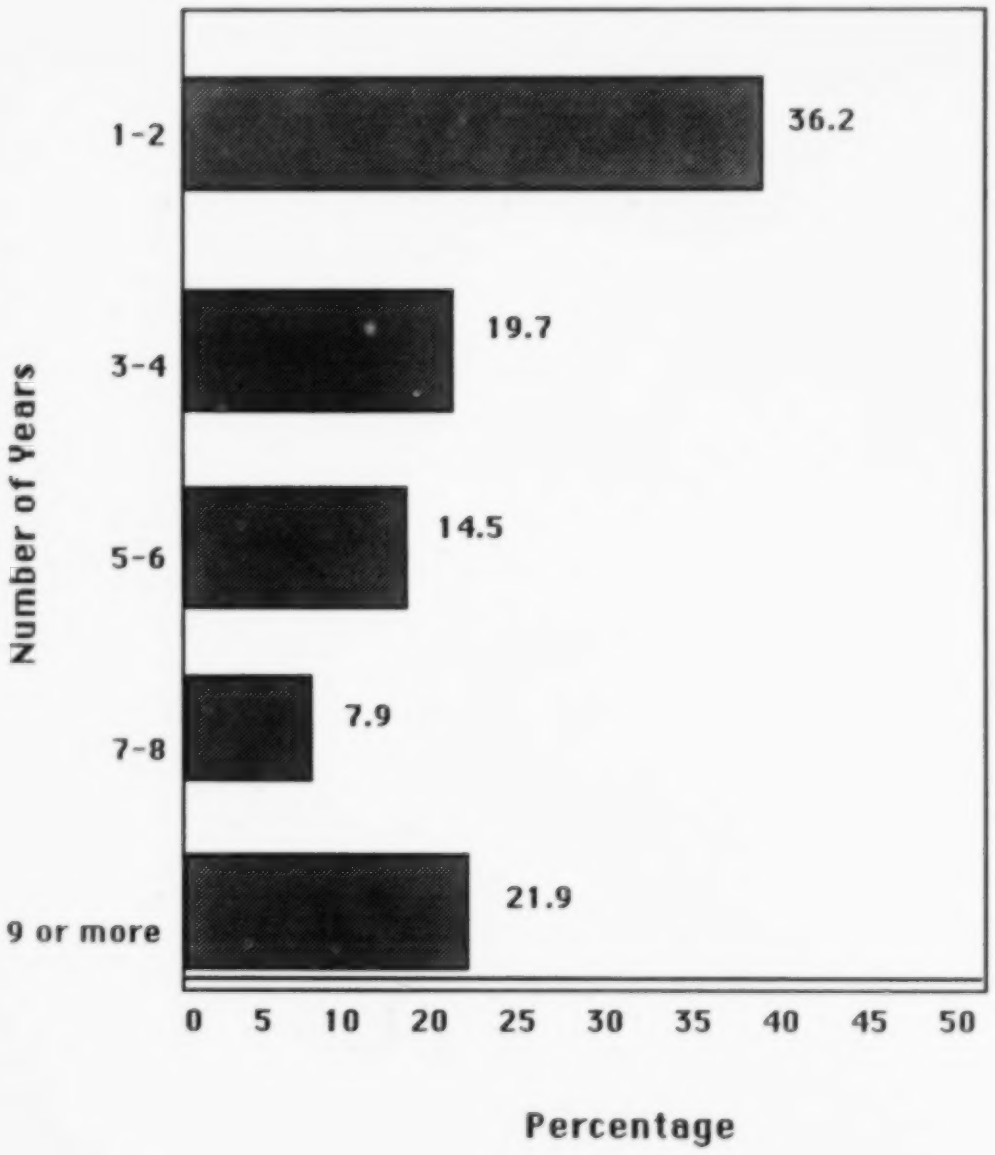
Educational Profile



CGT's Classified vs Certificated

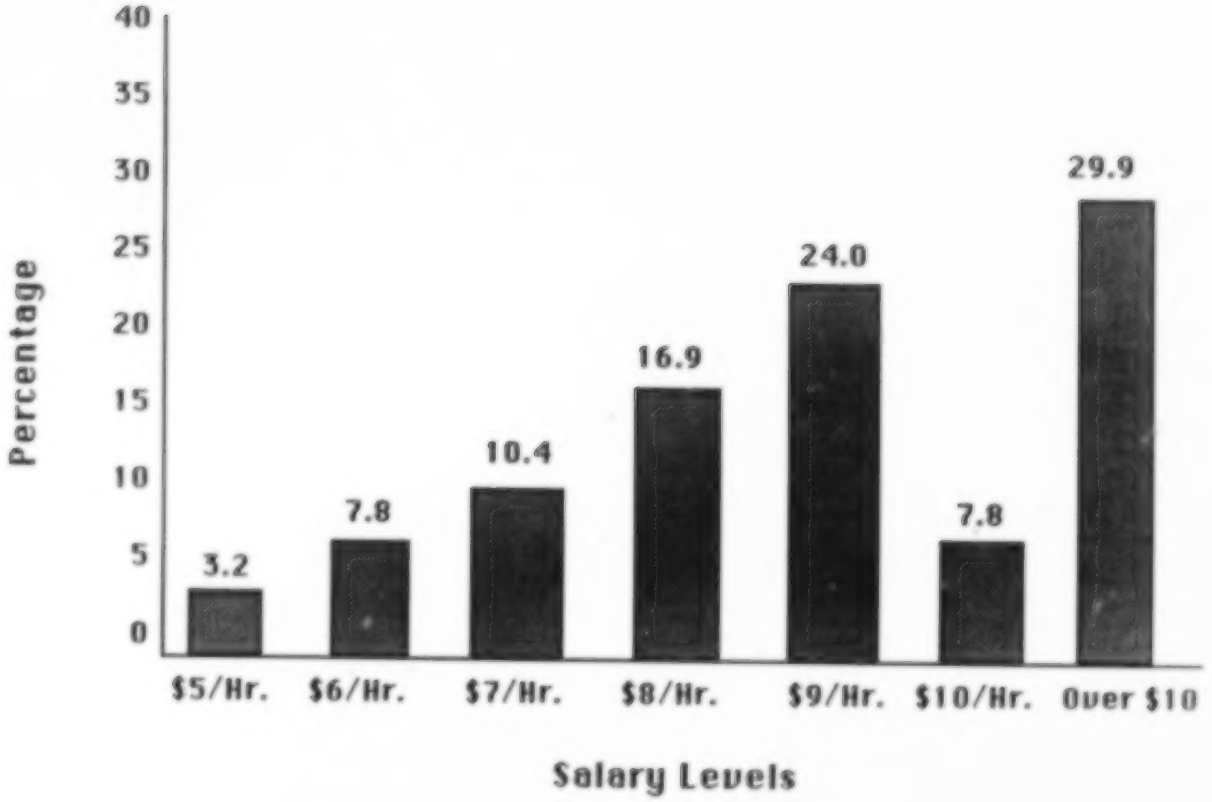


Breakdown by Number of Years in Position

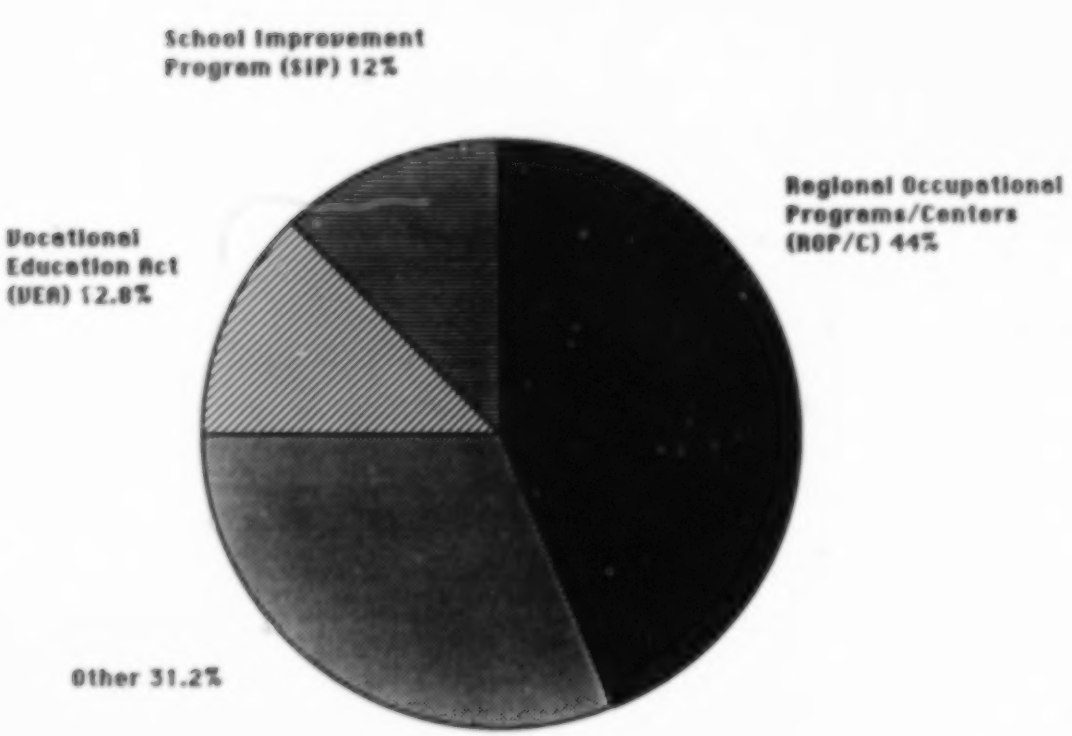


"Do You Like Your Job?"

Breakdown by Salary Level



"How Is Your Position Funded?"


School Improvement Program (SIP) 12%
Regional Occupational Programs/Centers (ROP/C) 44%
Vocational Education Act (VEA) 12.8%
Other 31.2%

Percentage of Students Served By Grade Level